**Human Rights in Comparative Perspective (Spring 2015)**

**Policy Memo**

All related assignments are due by **7pm on date listed, unless otherwise noted**. Submit papers electronically to [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com).

* **Monday, 20 April** – Workshop topics and arguments (in-class)
* **Monday, 4 May** – First Draft Due
* **Monday, 11 May** – Peer and Self Review Due
* **Monday, 18 May** – Final Draft Due

**IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT YOU SUBMIT YOUR WORK ON TIME FOR EACH PHASE OF THE ASSIGNMENT.**

**Prompt:**

* Your assignment is to advise an appropriate elected or appointed individual (e.g. U.S. President, your U.S. Senator or Representative, the chair of an appropriate sub-committee, the ICC Prosecutor, etc.) on at least one of the following human rights aspects of the US actions, policy, and practices during the War on Terror:
	+ The legal status “enemy combatants”
	+ Indefinite detention
	+ Enhanced interrogation techniques
	+ Drone attacks
* You will need to remain mindful of international law, domestic law, policy, and practice. Make direct and specific references to law, policy, and practice throughout your memo.

**Format:**

* Include the headings noted below (e.g. To, Re, Summary, etc.). You will write paragraphs under each section.
* Note that you do not have to respond to every question. Questions are listed to give you an idea about the appropriate approach to take in each section.
* **To:**
* **Re:**
* **Summary**
	+ Length: 1 paragraph
	+ Tell the reader what the problem is, what you want them to do, and give a brief summary of your reasoning.
* **Statement of Issue**
	+ What is the key issue you are addressing in this policy memo?
	+ Why is this issue significant? Why does it matter? What makes it relevant?
	+ Who/what is affected by this issue?
* **Background and Context**
	+ What is the history of this issue? How has it developed over time?
	+ What were the original ideas/politics/considerations driving this issue? Do those conditions still exist or have they changed?
	+ Is new/different information available now that was not available when this first became an issue?
	+ What critical historical moments have shaped policy on this issue?
	+ What are some of the most important or crucial policy decisions made on this issue over the past 15 years.
	+ NOTE: Do not provide a simple timeline. Be mindful what information you are including. Remember that you in the end will be making a case for a recommendation, so the history and context that you focus on should be relevant to this recommendation.
* **Statement of Debate**
	+ What are the most important debates/positions on this issue?
	+ Who has historically been on each side? Why?
	+ Be mindful of some or all of the following: political parties, political leaders in key positions, court decisions, international law, etc.
	+ How much and/or what kind of support is available for these positions currently?
* **Framing of the Issue**
	+ How is this position presented: in the media? In policy debates? In court cases?
	+ Are there any studies on public opinion on this issue? Be mindful of the questions asked and consider the implications.
	+ What must this official keep in mind before making a new statement or taking a new position on this issue?
* **Key Considerations**
	+ Are there any dynamics, legal consideration, key players, or implications that have not been considered or presented up to this point? If so, present them. Explain why they need to be considered.
	+ How does this issue impact foreign policy?
	+ Does the US need to consider the ICC with regard to this issue? Explain.
* **Recommended Action**
	+ Based on your research, suggest what this official ought to do moving forward.
	+ What are potential consequences and implications?
	+ What are the benefits and liabilities?

**Structure:**

* Outside research will be necessary. However, you may also use class readings.
* Your argument/position/recommendation should be clearly stated in the first paragraph in the summary section. Not kidding. State your argument clearly.
* Write clearly and succinctly. Policy memos are direct.
* Information provided should be relevant to your argument.
* You must provide evidence to back up your statements/positions. You are welcome to use MLA or Chicago citation formatting. Whichever format you use, be consistent, and use it correctly. Whether using footnotes or parenthetical citations, you should have correctly formatted list of references or a works cited at the end of your paper. YOU MUST CITE YOUR SOURCES.
* You must cite at least 7 sources, not counting assigned readings. Of those, three must academic sources (journal articles, books, or book chapters). As always, Wikipedia is a fine place to start your thinking, but it is not an acceptable source.

**Guidelines**:

* Length: 6 - 8 pages (not including Works Cited), double-spaced; I will not read past page 8.
* Font: 12pt Times New Roman or Garamond
* 1” Margins

**Grading:**

* **Argument:** my main concern is that you clearly make an argument. That argument should be built and sustained throughout the memo within the parameters of the assignment. (30%)
* **Evidence and Analysis:** Evidence should be used to support claims and to build argument. When evidence is used, it should be accompanied with your analysis. Why is this source or quotation necessary? How does it connect to your argument? You need to connect the dots for your reader. Do not make them figure out your point on their own. Is evidence engaged thoughtfully and relevant to your argument? Did you correctly cite your source? Carefully consider why this source is meaningful and relevant to your argument or to your audience. (40%)
* **Style and Organization:** Follow the directions for this memo and write in the style required by the format. Pay attention to how sentences work together, and make sure they flow in a logical order. Do the same with paragraphs. Ensure that paragraphs are unified, organized, and coherent. (20%)
* **Grammar/Spelling/Mechanics:** Be mindful of verb tenses, subject-verb agreement, sentence fragments, and run-on sentences. Be wary of semi-colons (;). Check your spelling and do not rely solely on auto-correct, which can turn a country (China) into a dinner plate (china). (10%)